appeared in the Hindustan Times dated 11 February, 1997 under the caption "Drought drives them to mortgage children"; and

(b) if so, the reaction of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF WELFARE (SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA): (a) Yes, Sir. (b) The news report was enquired into by Bolangir District Admn., which revealed that in village Govindpur, P.S. Bangomunda in the district of Bolangir Tulsi Gohir died on 29.12.1996 leaving behind his widow Nura Gohir, one minor daughter and four minor sons. On receipt of information, Tahesildar, Kantabanjhi visited the family on 31.12.1996 and found that all the four children of the decreased Tulsi Gohir's family were with their mother in their own house except one minor son who had gone to his paternal aunt's house. This temporary absence was misrepresented as mortgage of child. Tahasildar, Kantabanjhi has recorded statement of child's mother, Nura Gohir to this effect. Further enquiry, by Collector-Bolangir revealed that allegation of mortgaging of child as bonded labour is false. The surviving members of the family of deceased Tulsi Gohir have been given assistance under anti-poverty programmes being executed in the area.

Proposal for National Policy for Aged People

1621. DR. B.B. DUTTA: Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of aged/senior citizens in the country, State-wise and projection of their numerical strength for the next five years;

(b) the present central schemes being implemented for the welfare of senior citizens alongwith the criteria fixed for coverage and the provisions made thereunder, scheme-wise;

(c) whether Government propose to formulate the national policy for aged people; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF WELFARE (SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA): (a) to (d) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Implementation of the Scheme for Upgradation of Merit of SC and ST students in Gujarat

1622. SHRI AHMED PATEL: Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government of Gujarat have forwarded any proposal for implementing the scheme of upgradation of merit of SC and ST students in Gujarat for 1996-97 and 1997-98;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) funds released by Central Government to Gujarat for upgrading the merit of SC/ST students during the last three years, year-wise;

(d) whether schemes are being implemented properly and upto the desired levels; and

(e) if not, remedial measures proposed by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF WELFARE (SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA): (a) to (c) No Sir. No proposal has been received from the State Government of Gujarat for the last three years.

(d) Question does not arise.

(e) Reminders are sent to all the State Governments asking for proposals every year.

Amendment in the List of OBCs

1623. SHRI GOVINDRAO ADIK: Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have amended the list of OBCs of some States recently;